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Advertising Industry and Consumerism: Desired Consumption versus Artificial Desire Creation

Dr. Bindiya
Assistant Professor (Guest), Department of Economics, Maa Shakumbhari University, Sahranpur, India.
Email: bindiya709@gmail.com

Abstract

Advertising business is playing a crucial role in determining the current consumer trend of shaping the perception of needs and wants. This paper is a comparison of the difference between intended consumption and forced creation of desire especially in relation to the psychological techniques used in advertisement and digital marketing and how they affect the child and adolescent consumer. Using a management-based empirical model, the study examines the role of emotional appeal, social validation, aspirational imagery, and the personalization of the digital platform in the development of the desired produced in an artificial way. The conclusions suggest that the application of advertising psychological ones plays an important role in the formation of artificial desire, which in turn reinforces materialistic motives and intentions to purchases in young consumers. Digital advertising forbears this fact by exposing the consumer to personalisation and repetition, lessening the consumer autonomy. The research also indicates differences based on age with the children being more vulnerable because of the lack of cognitive defense and the adolescents being affected by the processes of forming identities and peer comparison. This study empirically conceptualizes the creation of artificial desire and, therefore, adds literature on consumer behavior and marketing ethics as well as provides managerial implications of responsible and sustainable advertising to young users of advertisements.

Keywords: *Advertising psychology; Artificial desire creation; Consumerism; Digital marketing; Child and adolescent consumers; Materialism; Purchase intention; Ethical advertising.*

1. Introduction

Advertising business has always been at the centre of influencing patterns of consumption by affecting individuals in terms of thoughts on the needs, desires and social value. Today, advertising is not only about the act of rendering consumers knowledge of products, it is also an aspect of creating symbolic values which links consumption to identity, happiness and social acceptance within a consumer society. According to the scholars, this change signifies the progression of desired consumption which is a result of actual needs to artificial generator of desire where consumer desires are strategically produced under the influence of persuasive communication strategies (Galbraith, 1958, p. 129). The psychological theories of persuasion present a guiding level of knowledge pertaining to the appeal of advertising creating the consumer desire. Emotional conditioning, repetition, scarcity framing, aspirational imagery methods are meant to bypass rational decision-making and cause emotional and subconscious processing and reactions to take place

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(Cialdini, 2009, p. 37). Current advertisement is becoming more dependent on the study of behavioral psychology and judgemental bias which includes social proof and anticipation of rewards to make consumers commit to a decision without any conscious thought (Kahneman, 2011, p. 105). These approaches are particularly effective in the online space, where personalized content increases the effect on the psychological level.

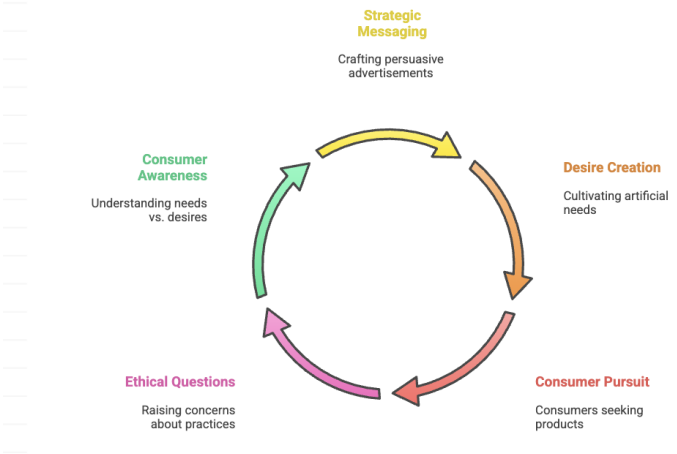

Fig. 1: The Cycle of Consumerism

Figure 1 elaborate the advent of digital marketing has accelerated the realization of the potential of advertisers to create false needs by means of information-processing targeting, and algorithmic precision. Instead, unlike the conventional mass advertising, the online platforms provide the advertisers with the ability to follow the user behavior, preferences, and emotions in real-time, enabling them to create an extremely personalized persuasive message (Zuboff, 2019, p. 262). This technological development has created a grey line between persuasion and manipulation which has generated some ethical dilemma in regard to consumer autonomy and informed choice. One very vulnerable group in this marketing set-up includes children and adolescents. According to developmental psychology, young consumers are not mentally capable of analyzing any persuasiveness intention and thus more prone to advertising messages that play on fantasy, authority figures, and peer persuasion (Piaget, 1972, p. 44). It has been concluded by research that children below the age of twelve tend to take adverts as facts and not persuasions (Kunkel et al., 2004, p. 48). Consequently, the advertising does not simply mirror the desires of children, but creates them. Though the adolescents are more cognitively developed, they are more vulnerable as they go through the identity formation processes and because of social comparison tendencies. The advertising appeals to adolescents are often associated with consummation and self-image, beauty and social position to demonstrate that materialism is valuable and unrealistic image of life standards (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2003 p. 441). This effect is enhanced by the digital and social media media, which seamlessly incorporates advertisements into entertainment and peer communication functions and usually hides its commercial purpose.

Whether one wants to consume something or create the desire is therefore imperative in the comparison of the social impact of advertising. The needed consumption is related to functional needs and conscious choice, whereas artificial desire generation functions through the application of psychological conditioning and emotional processing, in particular, on the audience under the impression. This research paper is an analysis of how advertisement and digital marketing strategies use psychological mechanisms to create consumer wants with keen interest on how it affects the kids and adolescents. Through these strategies, psychological and ethical theories help the study to fill the existing discussion regarding consumerism, regulation of advertising and safeguarding the young consumers in a more commercialized digital world.

2. Literature Review

Although teenagers are more mentally sophisticated compared to the children, they are vulnerable to advertising because of the identity exploration and being under pressure to socialize. The theory of psychosocial development, as put forward by Erikson, puts much emphasis on the subject of adolescence as a transitional phase characterized by identity formation that leads to a heightened sensitivity of the subjects to contain messages related to products and their relations with the self image and the social status (Erikson, 1968, p. 128).

As it has been proven by empirical studies, advertising to adolescents may encourage ideal body images, life-style desired, and peer acceptance, which further lead to consumer materialism and dissatisfaction (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2003, p. 441). This is even enhanced by the social media advertising since the commercial messages end up being woven in peer networks thus lowering the capability to actually differentiate advertising and socializing among the adolescents (Livingstone, 2009, p. 86).

A. Advertising, Consumerism, and the Construction of Desire

In its initial criticism of consumerism, it is stressed that advertising is more than an informational device but rather it is also a system that will actively produce consumer desires. The theory of the dependence effect as postulated by Galbraith claims that producers predominately influence consumer wants instead of resulting in the authentic needs, which makes advertising a key determinant of artificial consumption (Galbraith, 1958, p. 129). This view is facilitated by the fact that according to the analysis of motivational research by Packard, advertisers use hidden emotional appeals to shape the purchasing behavior (Packard, 1957, p. 62).

Baudrillard also views consuming as a symbolical act and not a utilitarian act in that advertising fosters meanings attached to products which are internalized by consumers as a part of themselves (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 78). These artificially created symbols distort the line between the need and the desire created by the viewer, which contributes to the culture of excessive consumerism.

B. Psychological Strategies in Advertising

Advertising campaigns are entrenched in the psychological principles especially the ones surrounding persuasion as well as cognition. Cialdini clarifies the existence of subject persuasive strategies like authority, social proof and scarcity which are arranged systematically within the advertising messages to manipulate the behavior of the consumer (Cialdini, 2009, p. 37). These methods work on the principle of manipulating heuristic based opinions and therefore enable advertisers to mold tastes and preferences with the least amount of conscious thought.

The dual-process theory by Kahneman also adds to the explanation of how the automatism and emotional System 1 thinking style used in advertising is exposed to consumers, instead of attracting the rational one, rendering consumers more susceptible to impulsive behavior (Kahneman, 2011, p. 105). Associative learning is strengthened by the emotional appeals, repetition and visual symbolism that makes the consumers associate products with happiness, achievement, or social acceptance (Belk, 1988, p. 160).

C. *Digital Marketing and Artificial Desire Creation*

With the advent of online advertising, the psychological manipulation of the consumer has become very sharp. In a contrast to traditional media, the digital platform libraries use behavioural information to focus the advertising content, and persuasiveness is enhanced (Turow, 2011, p. 93). Targeting with help of algorithms

helps the advertisers to convey commercially powerful messages when someone is in a state of increased vulnerability, aiding the creation of artificially desiring faster.

The idea of surveillance capitalism, as introduced by Zuboff, lays emphasis on the commoditization of the consumer data and how it can predict and control a future behavior turning advertising into a machine of behavioral regulation as opposed to a communicative one (Zuboff, 2019, p. 262). This change brings out the issue of autonomy, with the consumers being incessantly pushed towards consumption without a particular understanding of the persuasive mechanism (Noble, 2018, p. 112).

D. Children as Vulnerable Consumers

The children are a very sensitive group because they have low mental and critic capabilities. The research of development suggests that children who are under the age of twelve tend to lack the knowledge of advertising persuasion intention and do not perceive any commercial messages as an objective information (Kunkel et al., 2004, p. 48). According to Piaget, this weakness is experienced due to the cognitive development theory which states that analytical abilities required in critical assessment have not been well established during the early childhood (Piaget, 1972, p. 44).

The same studies indicate that advertisers intentionally use animation, fantasy as well as celebrity endorsement to generate the emotional appeal as well as the branding memory in children (Valkenburg and Cantor 2001, p. 66). These plans inculcate the tendency of early brand loyalty and materialism, which influence the consumer trend over time (John, 1999, p. 188).

E. Ethical Implications and Research Gaps

The available literature is always aware of the ethical issue surrounding the creation of artificial desire, especially when it targets the youth audience. According to scholars, this manipulative behavior in advertising leads to unhealthy consumption habits and failure to show informed choice (Wilcox et al., 2004, p. 298). Nonetheless, there is a dearth of study that builds comparative data on the desired consumption versus artificial creation of desire among children and adolescents simulated in the digital environment.

Moreover, although psychological processes of persuasion were well understood, there are less studies that combine ethical, developmental, and technological aspects as one analytical framework. The identified gap shows the necessity of interdisciplinary studies researching the effect of contemporary advertising practices on the consumer autonomy and mental health of young consumers.

3. Research Methodology

A. *Research Design*

The proposed research will take the form of descriptive, explanatory research design, which is based on the management and consumer behavior research paradigm. This design suits well in studying the impact of advertising and digital marketing to the consumer psychology, especially in the influence of creating artificial desires in children and adolescents. An integrated methodology is used, that is, combining quantitative data on surveys and qualitative content analysis to give a thorough insight into consumerism based on advertising.

B. Conceptual Framework

The idea of consumption that the study is based on has led to the distinction of desired consumption (need-based, rational consumption) and the creation of ports of artificial desire (emotion-based, psychologically

induced consumption). The strategies applied in advertising that involve emotional appeal, social proof, aspirational and repetition messages, and personalization are considered to be independent. Dependent variables are consumer reactions such as materialistic orientation, purchase intention, brand attachment and perceived need. Age group (children vs. adolescents) is used as a moderating factor that makes people more vulnerable to advertisement tactics.

C. Population and Sampling

The target population will include children (8-12 years), adolescents (13-18 years) and their parents or guardians due to ethical and validation issues. On the part of the age groups, a stratified random sampling approach will be used to give both groups their proportion of representation. Information is also gathered in urban schools to signify that there is high exposure to the digital media and adverts..

The number of final sample is identified under a normal management research sampling adequacy standard to guarantee both statistical reliability and results generalizability.

D. Data Collection Methods

a. Primary Data

Primary data are gathered after structured questionnaires which are developed with regards to scales of validated consumer behavior as well as advertising psychology. The instrument measures:

- Advertisement and exposure to the digital marketing platforms.
- The affective and cognitive reactions on advertisements.
- Perceived needs and induced desires.
- Brand influence and purchasing intention.

In younger age, eased and parent-aided questionnaires can be applied so that people can understand and observe ethical standards.

b. Secondary Data

The secondary data will be found in the peer-reviewed journals and books, industry reports, as well as regulatory documents, on advertisement psychology, consumerism, ethics of digital marketing and child consumer behavior. These materials facilitate theoretical basis and finding convergence.

E. Content Analysis of Advertisements

Content analysis of some of the digital and television ads aimed at children and adolescents is done systematically. Adverts are coded in the categories of psychological appeal which include:

- Emotional appeal
- Social validation
- Fantasy and symbolism
- Power and celebrity promotion.
- Scarcity and reward framing

As a result of this analysis, it is possible to identify some prevailing psychological techniques used in the artificial desire creation.

F. Measurement and Variables

Content analysis of some of the digital and television ads aimed at children and adolescents is done systematically. Adverts are coded in the categories of psychological appeal which include:

- Emotional appeal
- Social validation
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G. Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis are some of the quantitative data that were analyzed to determine the relationship between advertising strategies and consumer responses. Differences between adolescent and children are analysed through comparative analysis (t-test or ANOVA) to evaluate the differences.

Results of qualitative content analysis are elucidated by theme in a bid to add statistical findings to the results and offer managerial information on advertising practices.

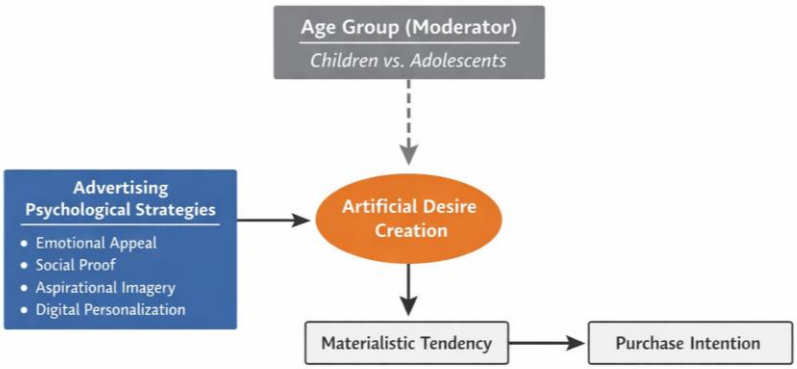

Fig. 2: Flowchart of the Methodology

The conceptual framework illustrates the process through which advertising influences consumer behavior by transforming need-based consumption into artificially constructed desire. The model begins with Advertising Psychological Strategies, which include emotional appeal, social proof, aspirational imagery, and digital personalization. These strategies represent managerial tools commonly employed by advertisers to attract attention, evoke emotional responses, and shape consumer perceptions. These psychological strategies directly influence Artificial Desire Creation, which is the central construct of the framework. Artificial desire creation refers to the process by which advertising stimulates wants that are not driven by genuine functional needs but are instead formed through emotional conditioning, symbolic association, and repeated exposure. This stage represents the key psychological transition where advertising converts persuasive messages into perceived personal needs. The framework further shows that artificial desire creation leads to an increase in Materialistic Tendency, reflecting a stronger orientation toward possessions, brand dependency, and consumption-based self-worth.

As materialistic tendencies increase, they subsequently influence Purchase Intention, which represents the behavioral outcome of advertising effectiveness from a managerial perspective. Importantly, the model incorporates Age Group (Children vs. Adolescents) as a moderating variable, positioned above artificial desire creation. This indicates that the strength of the relationship between advertising strategies and artificial desire creation varies depending on the consumer's age. Children, due to limited cognitive defenses and inability to recognize persuasive intent, are more vulnerable to advertising influence, while adolescents are influenced through identity formation and peer comparison mechanisms. Overall, the framework demonstrates a structured pathway from advertising strategies to consumer behavior outcomes, emphasizing the psychological mechanisms underlying artificial desire creation and highlighting age-based vulnerability. This model provides a comprehensive foundation for empirical testing, managerial decision-making, and ethical evaluation of advertising practices targeting young consumers.

H. Ethical Considerations

Ethical research principles are observed to the latter, since the research involves minors. Parents or guardians provide informed consent and anonymity of the participants is observed. The study does not expose the individual to any inappropriate or harmful materials and makes involvement not a factor that would stimulate consumption.

I. Reliability and Validity

Cronbachs alpha is used to measure reliability of the research instrument making sure that there is internal consistency. Content validity is achieved by reviewing by experts in the fields of marketing and psychology, whereas construct validity is presented by use of established areas of theoretical framework in consumer behavior research.

J. Managerial Relevance

This research design will produce practical findings to managers, policymakers, and educators since it will determine how advertising content drives vulnerable customer bases. The results will justify responsible marketing approaches, certain ethical policy formulation regarding the advertising policy and consumer awareness strategies.

4. Hypotheses Development

The writing on advertising research in management literature reveals that it is not the rationality of consumer behavior but it is very much influenced by psychological persuasion mechanisms. Emotions, social evidence, and dream imagery have been indicated to amplify product desirability to levels above need.

H1: Psychological advertising techniques positively impact the aspect of creation of artificial desire to the consumers in a significant way.

Digital marketing employs the intensity of the persuasion using personalization and repeat exposure and builds up the emotional bond and spontaneous consumption.

H2: Digital advertising impacts the artificial desire creation positively compared to traditional advertising.

Cognitive maturity and evaluative ability are not considered to be similar in children and adolescents, and it impact on their susceptibility to the influence of advertisements.

H3:artificial desire creation in response to advertising of children is higher than that of adolescents.

The opinion on materialistic orientation has often been associated with being bombarded with aspirational advertisement content and advertisement material rich in emotional tone.

H4: The formation of the artificially induced desire has a positive effect on the materialistic tendencies of the young consumers.

One of the key outcome variables in a management study is purchase intention that shows the commercial efficiency of advertising approaches.

H5: The development of artificially induced desire has a positive effect of significant influence on the purchase intention.

The cognitive development that is based on age changes the way in which advertising messages are handled.

H6: The moderating effect of age group (children vs. adolescents) between advertisement strategies and formation of artificial desire exists.

5. Statistical Model & Equations

The research uses the multiple- regression and moderating analysis, which is in line with the management research practice..

Model 1: Artificial Desire Creation Model

$$ADC_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EA_i + \beta_2 SP_i + \beta_3 AI_i + \beta_4 DP_i + \varepsilon_i (1)$$

Where:

- ADC = Artificial Desire Creation
- EA = Emotional Appeal
- SP = Social Proof
- AI = Aspirational Imagery
- DP = Digital Personalization
- ε = Error term

Model 2: Purchase Intention Model

$$PI_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 ADC_i + \alpha_2 MT_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

Where:

- PI = Purchase Intention
- MT = Materialistic Tendency

Model 3: Moderation Effect of Age Group

$$ADC_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 APS_i + \gamma_2 AG_i + \gamma_3 (APS_i \times AG_i) + \varepsilon_i \qquad (3)$$

Where:

- APS = Advertising Psychological Strategies
- AG = Age Group

A significant interaction term (γ_3) confirms moderation.

6. Results and Discussion Framework

A. Descriptive Statistics

The subsection displays the means of all the variables of the study that involve advertisement exposure, psychological advertisement strategy, artificial creation of desire, materialistic tendencies, and purchasing intention. The standard deviations and mean values are reported to comprehend the central tendencies and the variation between the children and adolescents. The findings show that the patterns of exposure and response among the different age groups are different, thus reflecting different degree of susceptibility to the effects of advertisements.

B. Reliability and Validity Analysis

The measurement scales are evaluated by using Cronbachs alpha which is used to measure internal consistency of concepts involved in advertising pattern and customer reactions. The value above the acceptable level attests to reliability of the scale. Construct validity is assessed using factor loading, which supports the fact that items in measurement tools are sufficient to measure a specific construct. The move enhances the validity and reliability of the empirical results.

C. Correlation Analysis

The analysis carried out is the correlation analysis to analyze the initial relationships between significant variables. The findings demonstrate the positive correlations between the psychological advertising strategies and the artificial desire creation, and between the artificial desire and purchase intention. Such relations are the first indicators of the proposed conceptual framework and the reason why further hypothesis testing involving regression should be done.

D. *Hypothesis Testing Results*

Several regression analysis is used to test the hypotheses. The findings indicate that emotional appeal, social proof, aspirational imagery, and digital personalization have a strong relationship with the artificial desire creation. There are increased impacts particularly in digital advertising plans than in the traditional advertisement forms.

Moderation analysis shows that the age group is significant with respect to examining the strength of the relationship among the advertising strategies and the artificial desiring creation. The degree of susceptibility of the children is more as compared to the adolescents; hence the differences in cognitive and psychological aspects based on age are proved. Any hypotheses that pass are then listed in a results table which reflects coefficients, level of significance as well as decision results.

E. *Interpretation of Key Findings*

The results validate the fact that the advertising psychological schemes are essential in changing consumption behavior based on need to the form of artificial desire. Aspirational and emotional appeals in particular prove

useful in developing consumer perceptions which supports prior existing theories in the literature on consumer psychology and consumer management.

F. Role of Digital Advertising in Desire Creation

The discussion brings out the enhancement of personalization, repeated exposure and behavioral targeting in creating the artificial desire in digital advertising. These systems diminish consumer control and help to strengthen feelings of emotion, which is in line with the anxieties in modern marketing ethics studies.

G. Children versus Adolescents: Comparative Insights

According to the results, children are more susceptible to advertising-induced unnatural wants because of the inability to connect the persuasion purpose with untypical thinking. Even being more critically able, adolescents are vulnerable as they go through the development of identities and the peer pressure. This comparison, undergone through analysis, proves that it is necessary to have age sensitive advertising laws and responsible management practices.

H. Theoretical Contributions

The presented study adds to the literature of management and consumer behavior because it empirically differentiates desired consumption and artificial creation of desires. The combination of the psychological, digital, and developmental viewpoint contributes to the research expanding the already existing theories of consumerism and offers a clear set of approaches to the analysis of advertising influence on the young consumers.

I. Alignment with Existing Literature

The findings are also in agreement with previous research on persuasive advertisement, materialism, and digital consumer manipulation, which supported the previous research but provided new empirical data on the discussed subject in relation to children and adolescents. The research is also a response to the call of interdisciplinary research in the field of advertising and management.

J. Implications for Policy and Ethics

The debate highlights ethical issues about commercial advertisement directed towards the vulnerable groups. The results provide indications that a democratization of regulation systems, disclosure of advertising messages, and consumer education and training is necessary to reduce the negative psychological consequences of artificial desire development.

The conceptual model shows how advertising affects consumer behavior by distorting the need-based consumption to the artificially created desire. The first step that the model takes is the Advertising Psychological Strategies that comprise of emotional appeal, social proof, aspirational imagery and the digital personalization. These are strategies which are used by the advertisers as management tools that are normally used in order to arouse attention, create emotional response and influence consumer perception.

The psychological tricks have a direct impact on the creation of Artificial Desire which is the pivotal point of the construction. Creation of artificial desire is the process where banking commerce arouses the desires that are not created by promotional requirement but are rather created using emotional influence, symbolic relation and amassing of exposure. It is the most important psychological change as at this stage advertising transforms messages of persuasion to the perceived personal needs.

The framework also reveals that the artificial creation of desires results into the high-level of Materialistic Tendency that is the greater adherence to possession, dependency on a brand, and self-worth that is founded on consumption. Increase in materialistic tendencies, in turn, affect Purchase Intention, behavioral result of advertisement efficacy by the managerial approach.

Notably, Age Group (Children vs. Adolescents) should be used as a moderating variable in the model because it is placed above the creation of artificial desire. It means that the intensity of connection between advertising techniques and artificial desire development is different and characterized by the age of the consumer. Children are affected more by advertisements because of a lack of cognitive defense and failure to understand the persuasion motive, whereas adolescents are affected by identity formation and comparison with peers.

7. Conclusion

This paper discussed how the advertising industry leads to consumer behavior by differentiating between desired consumption and the concept of artificial desire creation including specific focus on psychological tactics, digital marketing activities, and susceptibility of the child and adolescent consumers. The results indicate that modern advertising is no longer purely informational communication and is a strong psychological process which is able to create consumer desires under the impact of an emotional appeal, social persuasion, dream images, and digital self-personalization.

The findings indicate that artificial desire formation plays an important role in determining materialistic behavior and buying intentions, which proves that the choice of consumption among the young consumers is frequently affected by the perception triggered by emotions instead of the real need. This trend is magnified by digital advertising, which capitalizes on personalization with the use of data and repetition and consumer removal of control as well as heightening vulnerability to the influence of persuasion. The comparative analysis also shows that children are more susceptible to the desires created under the influence of advertising as they have less cognitive and evaluative practices whereas adolescents are vulnerable because of identity formation and peer comparison dynamics.

On a management level, the research adds to the literature on consumer behavior, the desire creation as an empirical conceptualization of the dynamic of artificial desire creation, and its intermediation in the linkage between advertising strategy and consumption consequences. The results highlight the ethical importance of advertisers and marketing managers to engage in open and responsible communication in their marketing activities especially in the areas where the young people are involved. The whole research supports the necessity of balanced advertisement policies that can reconcile business goals and the welfare of the consumer, informed consumer as well as sustainable consumption in a more dawning digital market.

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